

Agafay Desert Trail

Just a stone's throw from Marrakech, this unique trip welcomes you with luxurious accommodation and majestic Barb-Arab horses. The magnificent desert landscapes of the High Atlas mountains are perfect for exploring on horseback.

MOROCCO

6 DAYS | 5 NIGHTS

6 DAYS RIDING

Intermediate

Ride through the High Atlas Mountains, renowned for being the most beautiful region in Morocco. Pass through Berber villages to discover the traditions of the region, far from the metropolitan life of Marrakech. The trail's goal is to reach the Agafay desert; the terrain gradually opens up and you will ride at a varied pace with lots of trots, canters and full gallops when the terrain allows. This trail is only suitable for intermediate and experienced riders.

The colors of this region gradually change depending on the time of year, going from lush green to hay yellow around October. The landscape will radically change shape as you approach the Agafay desert, the open horizon perfect for letting go of the reins.

The pace for this trail is mixed: during the mountainous passages the pace is walking and technical, allowing you to relax and fully enjoy your surroundings. There is also the opportunity some faster paced riding when terrain allows

Highlights:

- Ride Morocco's most beautiful landscapes: High Atlas mountains, Berber villages & the dramatic Agafay desert
- Stunning Barb-Arab horses
- Luxury 5* riads, a lakeside spa hotel & a desert camp with pool
- Big skies, open horizons & fast gallops when the desert terrain opens up
- Immerse in Moroccan culture
- Just 45 minutes from Marrakech airport



ITINERARY

Day 1

Morning transfer from Marrakech airport to the Terres d'Amanar equestrian centre (around a 45 minute drive). You'll meet the guides and horses and hear about the route you are about to begin. There will be a short assessment to check all riders are happy with their horses before departing the equestrian centre. This first ride will take you through the hamlets of the valley, then through gentle hills on a track where you can enjoy a faster pace before crossing the olive groves. You'll end the day under Souktana, the highest peak in this region. Overnight in a 5* riad in Oumnast.

Riding time: 4.5 hours

Day 2

It's a beautiful day and after a delicious breakfast at your accommodation, you'll saddle up the horses and head out. This morning you'll cross a small plateau (Anwor), a vast area of fertile land. In the afternoon you'll ride up and over small hills and then cross small villages and plateaus to return to your riad accommodation.

Riding time: approx. 4 hours

Day 3

We leave our accommodation after a typical Berber breakfast. We cross large desert plateaus and overlook the Oued N'Fiss (a beautiful river valley). The water flows all year round, allowing lush greenery to grow along its banks. Once we've crossed the river it's time for the final climb to the Agafay desert! The evening light brings out the best in the unique desert colours. You can enjoy a faster pace in the middle of these hills before arriving at a luxury desert camp complete with swimming pool. Take advantage of the last rays of sunshine to have a dip in the pool before dinner in the on site restaurant.

Riding time: approx. 4h30

ITINERARY



Day 4

Morning and first light make this place magical. Enjoy a superb breakfast with a view! Your horses are waiting for you for a day of discovery in this magnificent setting. Depending on the season, we'll go into the remote valleys of this famous desert.

Day 5

We continue to enjoy this superb setting before climbing back on the saddle and heading due west. We cross the hills that make up this desert before returning to a more wooded landscape. More and more olive groves make up the landscape before you descend towards Lake Takerkoust. The final hotel of the trip is tucked away in the magnificent lakeside pistachio groves. You can enjoy the pool and terraces for aperitifs and dinner. We recommend booking into the spa or hammam to fully relax after your fifth day of riding!

Riding time: Approx. 4-5 hours.

Day 6

Breakfast in the first rays of sunshine, and we're back in the saddle for your final morning's riding. The riding time today is around 3 hours before lunch and heading back to Marrakech.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Level of Riding & Fitness

This trail is suitable for intermediate to advanced riders. Riders should be confident in the saddle, in control at all gaits and have experience riding on open terrain. Riders should be in good physical condition, happy to be in the saddle for 4-5 hours per day. The weight limit is 90 kilos.



Guides & Group Size

You will be guided by a Moroccan local from the Sport Travel team whose local knowledge is second to none. All guides speak Arabic, French and English fluently and are friendly and enthusiastic horsemen and women, keen to show visitors rural Morocco at it's best. An experienced and passionate equestrian support team will meet the group for meals and at overnight stops.

The maximum group size is 8 riders.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

The Horses

Morocco may well win the prize for the most stunning-looking horses! Known as Barb-Arabs, this breed was created almost a century ago to produce the perfect war horses by crossing fine Purebred Arabians and Barb (Berber) horses. This crossbreeding provides horses perfectly adapted to the mountainous and desert environment of the region, they are strong and robust, with the speed and beauty of Arabian horses. The horses stand at approx. 15hh and almost every possible colour is represented. All the horses used on the trail are owned by your hosts and are well cared for and loved. They live a happy lifestyle, as evidenced by their willing, friendly temperaments and when not on the trail, they live as nature intended in a large herd.



Tack & Riding Equipment

The tack used is English style, with high quality English leather saddles with comfortable suede or sheepskin padding. Leather bridles and saddle bags are provided for participants to carry water and equipment for the day. The rest of your luggage is transferred between overnight stops by vehicle.

ACCOMMODATION

This trail is unique for our Moroccan trails in that it offers much more luxurious accommodation than is usually used, especially considering this is a desert trail. All the hotels have swimming pools and on your final night, the hotel offers a hammam and spa. Accommodation is based on two sharing although single rooms are available for an additional supplement. Click on the links below to view the accommodation options.

Please note these are the usual options but your hosts reserve the right to use alternative accommodation (of a similar standard) should these be fully booked.

Day 1: 5* Riad with swimming pool (Riad Sougtani)

Day 2: 5* Riad with swimming pool (Riad Sougtani)

Day 3: Luxury desert camp with swimming pool and restaurant (Inara Camp)

Day 4: Luxury desert camp with swimming pool and restaurant (Inara Camp)

Day 5: Lakeside hotel with spa and swimming pool (Kasbah Beldi)

This trail includes all meals from lunch on your arrival day to lunch on your departure day. You can expect traditional Moroccan cuisine, breakfast is served at your accommodation each morning and is usually a selection of bread, preserves, cakes, fresh fruit, eggs, tea, coffee and juice. Make sure to sample msemen, a delicious crepe served in this region. Dinners will be typical and traditional Moroccan fare featuring plenty of vegetables, chicken, beef, and lamb in the form of tagine, soups, stews and couscous. Lunch is usually lighter, with fresh salad, pasta, rice or couscous and a selection of seasonal and delicious fruits. Allergies and special diets can be accommodated if communicated in advance. One of the loveliest features of riding in this part of the world is the delicious sweet mint tea served throughout the day, incredibly refreshing and worth getting used to as English-style tea with milk is not widely available here!



WHAT'S INCLUDED

Price includes:

- 6 days trail riding (between 3 and 5 hours per day)
- 5 nights accommodation
- Trail riding horse, tack and saddlebags
- All meals from lunch on arrival day to lunch on departure day
- Tea, coffee, soft drinks and water
- Airport transfers

Price excludes:

- Flights
- Alcoholic drinks
- Optional spa/hammam at the final hotel



FLIGHTS & AIRPORT TRANSFERS

Do NOT book flights until you have received the 'Booking Confirmation Email' from saddletravel.com

You should fly into Marrakech airport and book a flight that arrives before midday. The airport transfer time is between 45 minutes and one hour. Your departure flight on the final day should be after 6:30 pm or we recommend staying an additional night in Marrakech.

CLIMATE

The climate in Morocco is hot all year round, with very little rain. From December to February, winter temperatures are around 20°C during the day and drop below 10°C at night. March to May and October to November are generally very pleasant, with temperatures between 20 and 30°C during the day and over 10°C at night. This tour is not available in June/July/August due to extreme heat.

If you decide to visit the mountainous part of the route between November and March, don't be surprised to see a light layer of snow or ice!

CURRENCY & TIPPING

The local currency in Morocco is the Moroccan dirham. Your holiday is all-inclusive, so we recommend you don't bring too much money with you. At the end of your stay you will have some free time in Essaouira, where you can enjoy and shop. Bring enough cash to buy souvenirs and be prepared to haggle!

Tipping your guide is at your discretion, and will be greatly appreciated by the team.



WHAT TO BRING

We recommend wearing your riding boots when travelling and carrying one set of riding clothing and your riding hat in your hand luggage, so should your luggage not make it to the destination you'll still be able to ride.

Space is limited in the vehicle carrying your belongings on the trek, so please travel light and use a large backpack or soft travel bag rather than a hard case. Please use the checklist as a guide, taking into account the season in which you ride.

- Your own riding hat or helmet, adjusted to your size
- Comfortable riding trousers
- Non-slip riding or trekking boots
- Chaps
- Riding gloves
- Long-sleeved T-shirts to protect you from the sun
- Warm clothing such as a fleece or woollen jumper
- Clothes for your mornings and evenings in luxury accommodation
- Waterproof jacket - it rarely rains, but it's best to be prepared
- Bandana or scarf to protect you from the sun and dust
- Comfortable clothes for the evening
- Light footwear for when you're not riding
- Swimming costume and light towel
- Sun cream and lip balm
- Sunglasses and hat
- Portable battery / Power bank
- Adapter
- Copy of your travel insurance
- Personal medical treatment

HEALTH

For worry-free holidays abroad visit :

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/morocco>

Consult your GP at least 8 weeks before you leave so that he or she can advise you and, if necessary, carry out any vaccinations appropriate to your age and state of health.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

A valid passport covering the entire planned stay is required for a stay in Morocco. Passports are compulsory, including for groups on organised tourist trips. Entry to Morocco is no longer possible on presentation of the national identity card alone.

For more information, visit

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/morocco>

For all other nationalities, please contact your embassy to check the conditions and procedures for entering the country.

It is your sole responsibility to be in possession of the travel documents you need to enjoy your holiday.

RIDING DECLARATION

"I declare that I am an experienced rider, able to mount and dismount without assistance. I have a good seat and am confident and in control at all gaits (including collected trot, balanced canter and fast canter), and am physically fit to ride. I do not suffer from any disability or illness that could affect my safety or the safety of others."

PAYMENT & CANCELLATION TERMS

SaddleTravel.com holidays are confirmed with 20% non-refundable deposit. The full balance is due 56 days before start date.

If you cancel your booking less than 56 days before the start date of your trail we are entitled to receive full payment, less refunds as follows:

- 42 days or more before booking date: 50% refund
- 28 days or more: 30% refund
- less than 28 days before booking date: no refund.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

All saddletravel.com customers are required to take out appropriate travel insurance that covers horse riding and holiday cancellation. Proof of insurance details will be required during the booking process.



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